



## MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

*Comm Secy*  
**LINDA McCULLOCH**  
EXHIBIT #4  
DATE Jan 12 2011  
HB 88

HB 88: Youth Election Judges  
House State Administration, RM 45  
January 12, 2011 @ 9 AM  
Secretary Linda McCulloch's Testimony

- Good morning Madam Chair, members of the committee.
- For the record, I am Montana Secretary of State Linda McCulloch.
- I am here today to support House Bill 88, an act allowing for student election judges at polling places and on counting boards and special absentee election boards.
- Thank you Representative Wilmer for carrying this important legislation, and for supporting youth civic engagement in government.
- I have been interested in student election judge legislation in other states for years, and as Rep. Wilmer mentioned, this isn't the first time the idea has been brought before our Legislature.
  - It is, however, the first time some of you have had the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of this promising generation.
- Our neighbors to the south, Wyoming, allows student election judges. I have for you today the application from Secretary Max Maxfield's website for students to apply to be election judges. With the Chair's permission I'll pass these out at the end of my testimony.
- Wyoming is one of many states that allows student election judges or participants.
  - A 2007 poll by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission suggests that 37 states allow this young generation to participate in the election process.
  - At the time, a handful of other states were pending legislation.
- As elected leaders, it is our responsibility to support Montana's future generations and their ability to become engaged and active citizens.
- I worked on my first campaign, a county commission race, when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. It was the impetus that has fueled my passion for elections and voting.
  - There are many young adults who would treasure the opportunity to participate in the elections process, but perhaps don't have political connections.
  - This bill gives them the chance to get involved, and make a difference in their community and state.

- Civic engagement in government is important for every citizen, and it is just one of the important impacts this bill will have in Montana.
- Giving our young people an opportunity to participate in government makes state government more transparent to the public.
- This bill opens the elections process up to more Montanans. It engages our voters at an earlier age.
- We know that the younger a person votes for the first time, the more likely they are to vote at each and every election throughout their lives.
- House Bill 88 creates a larger pool of election workers. Potentially, a pool of workers more comfortable working with the technology and equipment necessary for running elections.
- Over the years, Montana has seen a steady decline in its number of eligible and willing election workers. This shortage could lead to administrative mistakes and confusion by voters.
- By allowing 16 and 17 year-olds the opportunity to serve as election judges, this Legislature will not only help with the scarcity of workers, you will be providing an innovative civic experience to Montana students.
- You'll notice this bill draft includes a provision requiring written consent from the student's parents or guardian, and school.
- As a teacher, I believe it is important for a student's school to be kept in the loop about a request to be out of school to serve as an election judge.
- It is vital that parents are a part of their child's decision to become an election judge.
- Montana's teenagers are the future voters of America, and giving 16 and 17 year-olds a first-hand look at how elections are run will give them an appreciation of the value of registering and voting.
- A "yes" vote not only supports Montana's county Election Administrators and the education of Montana's teenagers, it clearly supports fair and accurate elections.
- Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, I ask for your favorable vote for House Bill 88.
- I am available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time today.